

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Medicine Lake Trap Club
Box 290
Medicine Lake, MT 59247

2. Type of Proposed Action: This proposal is divided into three parts:

- (1). Purchase and install a pat trap machine.
- (2). Purchase and install two cordless voice call release units.
- (3). Install replacement scoring stands.

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The range has been leased from Wayne and Kathy Stringer since 1987 on 5 acres, north of the town of Medicine Lake, MT. These five acres are located in the SE ¼ SE ¼ of Section 24, Township 32 north, Range 55 east MPM, in Sheridan County, Montana.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices)

5. Need for the Action(s): Part 1 Automatic Traps: Safety is one on the primary concerns, as automatic traps do not require anyone to be in the trap house during operation. Consequently, it will eliminate the need of having someone down range in the trap house during shooting. Secondarily it will require fewer people overall for the operation, allow both single and

double trap options and convenience for shooters especially during classes such as hunter education.

Part 2 Cordless Voice Call Release Units: Safety enhanced due to the lack of cords on the field as trip hazards. Voice call will require fewer personnel and improved shooting experience due to reduced reaction time for target release and overall enhanced shooting experience for group and other organized shooting events. Part 3 Scoring Stands: Current wooden scoring stands are old and becoming unstable.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The objective is to provide a safe, more efficient operation of the ranges, reduction in number of essential personnel, and increased variety of safe shooting opportunities on the range(s). This will ultimately result in more efficient operations and improved training or educational environment for the club, other user organizations, law enforcement, hunter education, and any other additional public uses.

7. Maps:

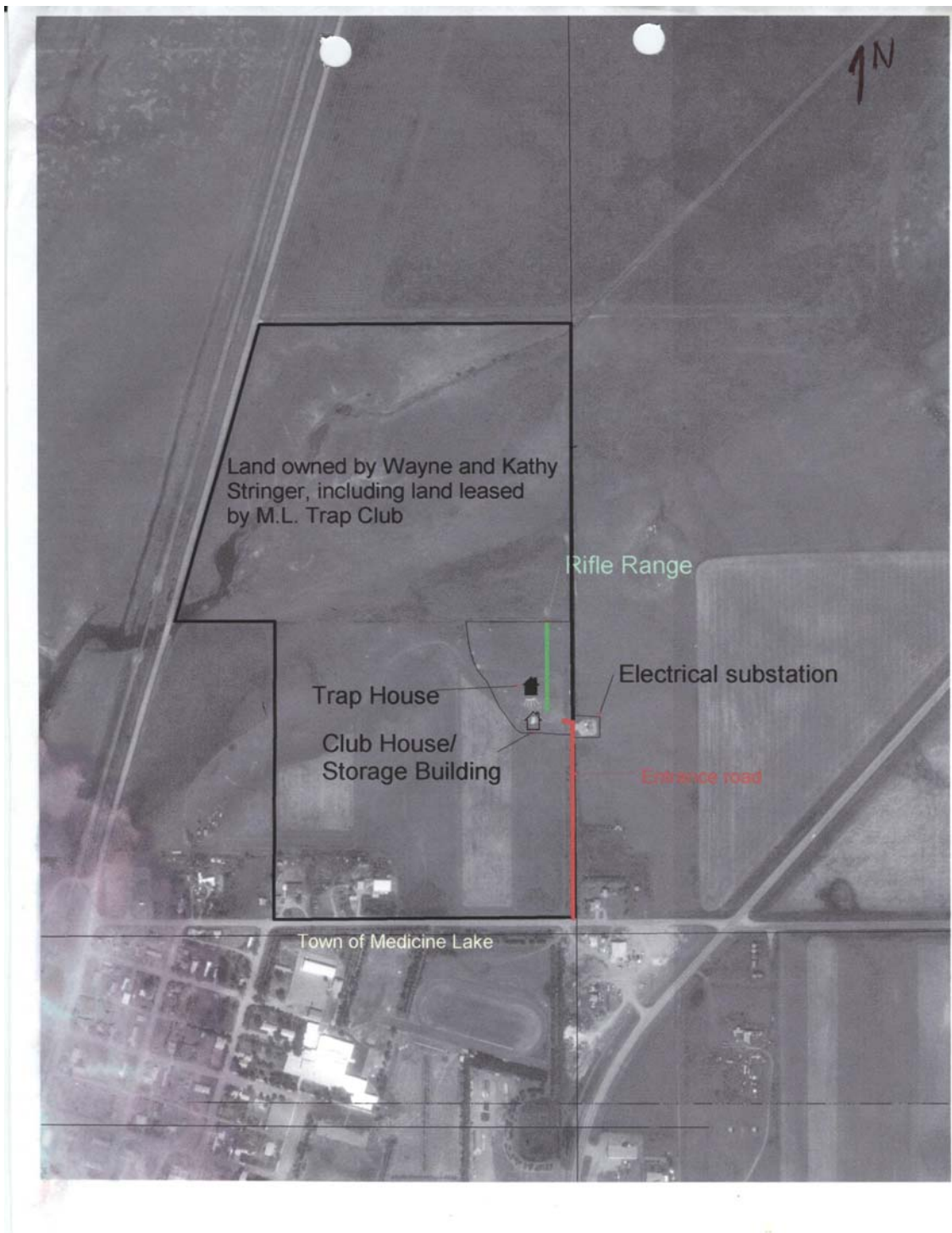


Figure 1 - Two Medicine Lake Area Map with Trap Range

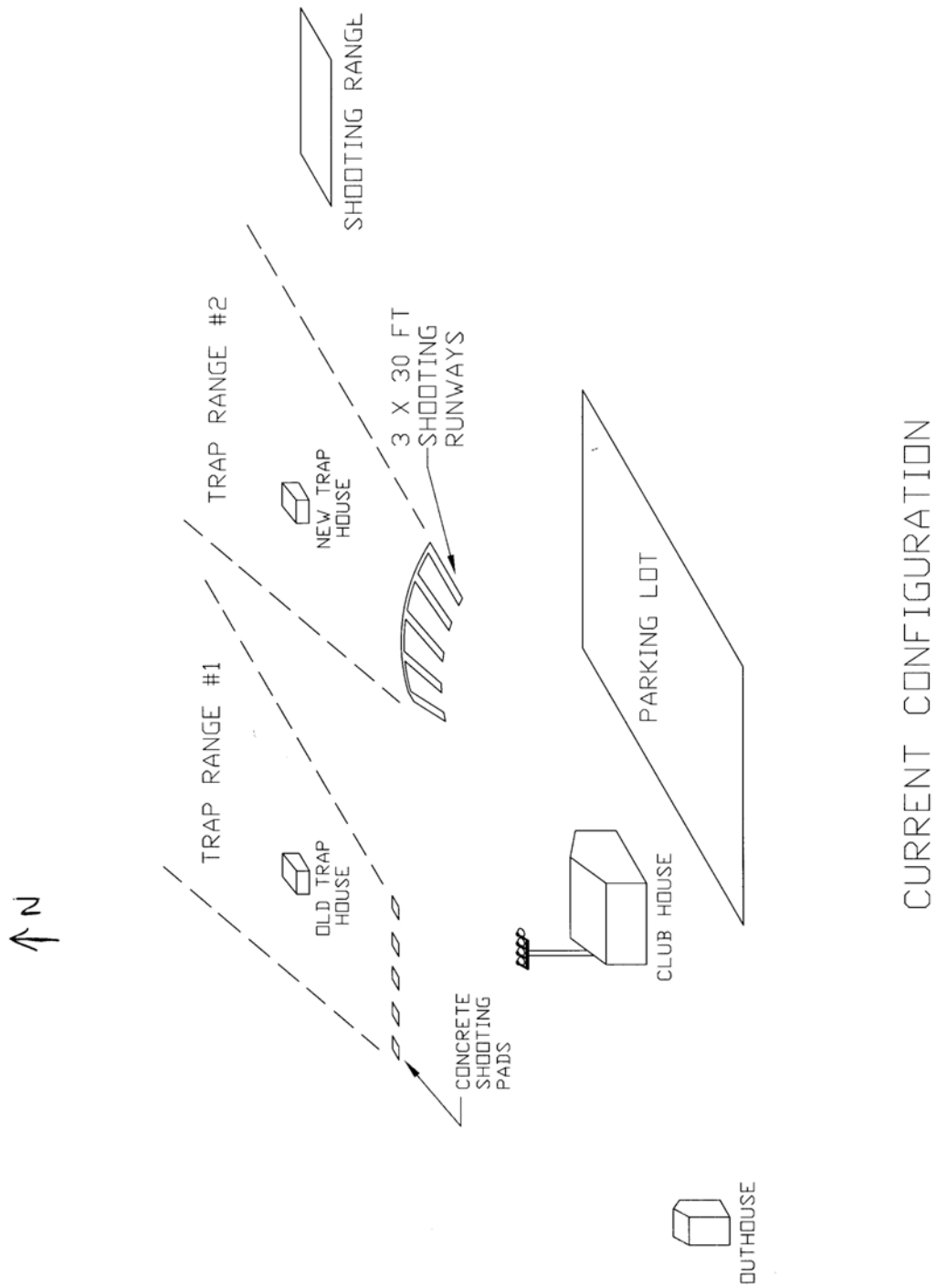


Figure 2 - Two Medicine Lake Trap Range Configuration

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

Range is 5 acres, but improvements are limited to a much smaller area with proposed range enhancements (See para. 2).

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The area affected is the existing 20 year old Two Medicine Lake Trap Club on 5 acres approximately directly north of Two Medicine Lake, MT. Range is built upon former agricultural land and is surrounded by agricultural parcels on the west, north and east, with the town of Two Medicine Lake on the south.

10. Description of Project: In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2009.

See paragraph 2 for outline of proposed actions.

Part 1 will replace older manual trap with automatic pat trap machine.

Part 2 will be the installation of two cordless voice call release units.

Part 3 will replace old and degraded scoring stands with new stands.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) **Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

Agency Name _____ Permit _____

N/A

Funding:

Agency Name _____ Funding Amount _____

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks \$6,620

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: In 2006 the Two Medicine Lake Trap Club traditionally hosts two ATA registered shoots per year, plus a "Tough-Man" shoot in February and the "Hi-Line" shoot for teams across the Hi-Line of Montana. Additionally the club hosts shoots for Ducks Unlimited and the local youth scholastic shooting sports. The range is also utilized for shooting education events for 4-H and hunter education programs. The club sponsors both league and public shooting with the pheasant "warm-up" shoot becoming very popular. The range has also been made available for law enforcement usage.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements and safety enhancements had been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors. No public involvement was deemed necessary.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Dale Nelson
Box 330
Froid, MT 59226
(406) 766-2222
2biglake@nemontel.net

16. Other Pertinent Information:

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: March 26, 2007

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist - The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding agricultural land on three sides, and the highway and town of Two Medicine Lake to the south.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) installing an automatic trap machine, two cordless voice call release units, and replacement scoring stands.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** area will remain as an active trap range.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Two alternatives have been considered, A (Proposed Alternative) and B (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (A) nor the no action alternative (B) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of alternatives **A** to provide an improved safety environment with an automatic trap machine, negating the need for a person in the trap house to load trap machine. Replacement of the deteriorating scoring stands will also enhance safety and the cordless voice call release units will improve safety while enhancing both the daily operations and registered shoots. Additionally, the range is available to the general public, community organizations, law enforcement, shotgun training, and hunter education.
- The No Action Alternative would be not to add the automatic trap, the cordless voice call release systems and replace the scoring stands. The trap range would continue on with present shooting activities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include

trap range without the proposed improvements or safe and secure storage. Range also includes an additional range that can accommodate rifle, shotgun, pistol, and black powder shooting. These other range activities would also continue. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Dale Nelson, Box 330, Froid, MT 59226.

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties leased by the Medicine Lake Trap Club. The low impact activities proposed and the increased recreational opportunity indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 20 year history of the Medicine Lake Trap Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public, indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the addition of an automatic trap, cordless voice call systems and new scoring stands.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: July 6, 2007

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any: None